DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 212 058 EA 014 331

AUTHOR Baker, Carol E.
TITLE Self-Renewal and the Life Cycle: Implications for Men and Women in Administration.
PUB DATE Aug 81
NOTE 25p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Conference of Professors of Educational Administration (35th, Seattle, WA, August 16-21, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Education; Educational Administration; Faculty Advisers; *Graduate Students; Higher Education; Individual Development; *Mentors; Professional Development; *Sex Differences; *Student Teacher Relationship

ABSTRACT

Studies of the adult life cycle indicate three identifiable transitional periods within working years in which one must reexamine and renew the direction of life and work. However, research findings indicate the timing and tasks of these vital transitions differ widely for men and women. These findings hold implications for individual and family stability and for sponsorship of persons entering educational administration. Research results repeatedly emphasize the importance of the mentor in career development during the learner's twenties and early thirties. Professors of graduate students need to be cognizant of their potential importance as mentors in supporting capable students' career drives, and need to develop a sensitivity to students' progress in the life cycle. Life-cycle studies emphasize the differences in male and female development. If graduate women students are to achieve high ranking positions in educational administration, special support services are indicated for development of traits commonly associated with being male. For students seeking renewal through administrative programs, experiential learning situations can be vital vehicles for growth. Particularly interesting are internships or apprenticeships and self-directed learning. (Author/MLF)

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SELF-RENEWAL AND THE LIFE CYCLE:

IMPLICATIONS FOR MEN AND WOMEN IN ADMINISTRATION

35th NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF PROFESSORS

OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

AUGUST 16-21, 1981

CAROL E. BAKER, Ed.D.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

EA 014 331

Renewal - restoring to freshness - beginning again! The words suggest the mystique of Spring and evoke the promise of fullness and ripeness. For renewal of self, the mystery becomes identifying a catalyst which initiates one's psychological development toward further levels of achievement. Not surprisingly, the catalyst is within the self, emerging periodically throughout life in the guise of crisis!

Artists, poets, playwrights and philosophers were centuries ahead of social scientists in describing the human life cycle, its periods of stability followed by transitional upheavals that unraveled the fabric of existence. Not until the mid 20th century did theoretical concepts emerge which provided a basis for understanding adulthood as several stages of development, each marked by particular tasks, which, if not effectively resolved, created persistent perplexity (Buehler, 1962; Chickering and Havighurst, 1981; Erikson, 1950, 1959).

This paper addresses the life cycle of men and of women as conceptualized by selected researchers. It examines the unique patterns of each sex as revealed in our culture. The developmental tasks of life stages are discussed and transitional periods which lead to renewal and growth are identified. Finally, implications in relation to the life cycle are suggested for advising men and women in educational administration programs.

3 - Psych.

The Male Life Cycle

One exciting scheme for examing the life structure of the American male is presented by Daniel Levinson (1978) in The Seasons of A Man's Life. Built on earlier works by Erikson (1950, 1959), Seasons presents life as an orderly sequence of events best studied through an examination of two components most

central to a man's life, occupation and marriage - family. The alternating stable and transitional periods have definite tasks which give character and distinction to life. Figure 1 presents the eras in adult development and corresponding developmental tasks.

The Novice Period

Becoming an adult male is so complex and important, Levinson sees this sequence as three periods: The Early Adult Transition (age 17-22), Entering the Adult World (age 22-28), and The Age 30 Transition (age 28-33).

The early adult transition. Two major tasks characterize this transitional period: leaving adolescent life and taking preliminary steps into the adult world. Separation from family frequently begins as a young man enters college or military service. In leaving the family home, new living arrangements must be secured and both financial and emotional dependence reduced. With these terminations come forays into the adult world in which one measures fantasies against the realities of adulthood and tests choices of life style different from that of parents.

Entering the adult world. A period of stability follows in which the young man addresses two major tasks: exploration and creating a stable structure. Checking out life's choices without premature commitment and exploring life's treasures conflict with the need to "make something of one's life," to gain membership and status in the tribe. While most men enter occupations and marry, or develop intimate relationships, there is great transiency and flux within a loosely structured life.

The age 30 transition. In the late twenties, new developmental tasks push for another life structure; and so the Age 30 Transition offers a second chance, an opportunity to appraise earlier commitments and shape a more

Figure 1
THE MALE LIFE CYCLE AND
CORRESPONDING DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS

AGE LINE	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70
	Early Adult Transition (17 - 22)			Age 30 Transition (28 - 33)		Mid-Life Transition (40 - 45)		Age 50 Transition (50 - 55)		Late Adult Transition (60 - 65)		
		Entering Adult World (22 - 28)			Settling Down (33 - 40)		Enteringng Middle Adulthood (45 - 50)		Culmination of Middle Adulthood (55 - 60)		Late Adulthood (65 -)	

DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS

Novice Period
(1) Forming a Dream
(2) Forming a Mentor Relationship
(3) Forming an Occupation
(4) Forming love Relationships

Early Adult Transition (17-22)
(1) Leave Adolescent Life
-move out of family home
-new living arrangements
-less financial dependence
-reduced emotional dependence

(2) Taking Preliminary Steps Into Adult World
-learning about adult world
-refine fantasies about adult world
-make and test choices

Entering Adult World (22-28)
(1) Exploring Possibilities for Adult Living
-stay home

(2) Create Stable Life Structures
-get married
-select career
-obtain job

Age 30 Transition (28-33)
Second Chance
Facing Realities
Review Previous Commitments
Reshape Commitments for Future

Settling Down (33-40)
(1) Establish Niche
-anchor life to home, family, community
-develop competence in chosen craft
-valued member of valued world

(2) Work at Advancement
-strive to advance
-progress on timetable
-speak with own voice
-greater measure of authority
-become own man
-break with mentor

Mid-Life Transition (40-45)
Comes to Terms with Life
(1) Review life and reappraise what one has done with it
(2) Take steps toward modifying negative aspects and test new choices
(3) Deal with Polarities
-young/old
-destruction/creation
-masculine/feminine
-attachment/separateness

Enter Middle Adulthood (45-50)
Make Choices in Forming New Life Structure
-relationships with people
-occupation
-physical location
-adapt to physical changes
-satisfaction attained or not

From Daniel Levinson, The Seasons of a Man's Life

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fulfilling life structure. For some the transition is relatively trouble free; for others, it is a time of deep and stressful crisis - a time of "hitting the bottom." This transition offers the maturing male the first oportunity for renewal in the profession and in all of life's structure.

Major tasks of the period. Entry into adulthood contains four prominent tasks that build a foundation for growth. Forming and living out the Dream - "an imagined possibility . . . of self-in-adult world . . . that generates excitement and vitality." If the life structure supports the development of the Dream, the man stands a chance of fulfillment. However, a Dream neglected may lead to conflict which must be resolved during a later phase. The mentor and the special woman play primary support roles in working out the Dream.

Forming an occupation is a sequential process lasting several years. Having made an initial choice of work, one develops skills and credentials - an occupational identity. As a novice, a man may try alternative directions, not committing to one until the end of the Age 30 Transition.

Forming a marriage and family presents a formidable task in the Novice Period, crucial to the well being of the individual. Unfortunately, mate selection is likely to occur before the male has a grasp of life's direction or the capability of sustaining an intimate relationship. Longevity of the relationship depends on mutual support of each other's Dream. Disparities here emerge at the Age Thirty or Mid-Life Transition.

Forming mentor relationships occurs informally in the work setting. The mentor who facilitates the Dream is teacher, sponsor, host, guide, exemplar, and counsel. Lasting three to ten years, the relationship supports the protege' during the novice period but becomes problematic near the Age 30 Transition.

The Settling Down Period

Ages 33 to 40 present a time to become serious about life, work and relationships. Two major tasks present the challenge of this period: establishing one's niche in society and working at advancement.

Early settling down. This is the time to climb, moving up toward realization of the Dream - achieving status in the organization or community, maintaining a stable family structure, developing competence in one's craft and gaining recognition as a valued member of the tribe represent typical developmental tasks during three to four years of this new phase.

Late settling down. "Becoming one's own man" is the central focus of the late thirties. Progress toward seniority is measured on a timetable of one's own design. Speaking with one's own voice, gaining status as full peer of former mentors and earning a greater measure of authority are paramount tasks. The ultimate act of liberation is the break from one's mentor.

The Mid-Life Transition

The bridge from early to middle adulthood means coming to terms with the past and preparing for the future. Three developmental tasks must be addressed: reappraising the past, modifying the life structure for greater fulfillment, and gaining individualzation. Here Levinson reveals four polarities whose resolution is paramount.

1. Young/Old - at mid-life one feels youthful, more mature but not ready for middle-age.

2. Destruction/Creation - concerns for one's own mortality and the desire to create products of value.

3. Masculine/Feminine - integration of "gender qualities" within the self.

4. Attachment/Separateness - adapting to the external world versus exploring the enclosed world of one's inner self.

The Mid-Life Transition presents a second notable opportunity for self-renewal. For many men the period is a Pandora's Box of crises as every aspect of life passes in review and one's time perspecitvie is wrenched from "time since birth" to "time left to live" (Neugarten, 1977). This agonizing reappraisal pushes one to reprioritizing elements within the life structure. A man in this transition makes false starts in love relationships, occupations and professional pursuits until he charts a new course and structure for life. Typically this means modifying the Dream, modifying the marriage, and becoming the mentor.

Entering Middle Adulthood

The period of the late forties represents a time for making crucial choices about which a new life structure will be built. Frequently, the life one established prior to age 45 will no longer work for the self or for those who support it. In making choices there may follow a period of testing - trying a new job, entering a series of casual love relationships, moves about the country in search of a new and tolerable niche. Now the dominant developmental task is creating a satisfactory structure for the final half of life.

Age 50 Transition

Middle adulthood lasts six to eight years until the time for reappraisal comes agian, just as one season moves to the next. Levinson's research did not extend to this period but he projected a transition which will last until age 55 in which developmental tasks involve questioning the suitability of the

occupation as a vehicle for fulfillment in later life. Again, adjustments in marriage and the family are imperative as the "empty nest" is the catalyst for modified intimate relationships. Opportunity for self renewal occurs again! "Time left to live" pushes one to prioritize again and build only on those aspects of life vital to fulfillment.

Beyond the middle fifties, Levinson suggests another era of stability, then the Late Adult Transition, followed by Late Adulthood.

The Female Life Cycle

To study the life cycle of women, two models are helpful in illustrating diverse paths. First, a scheme developed from the work of Hennig (1970) shows the stages and tasks of the career oriented woman. Then the female progression is viewed in the context of the family life cycle, drawing primarily from Bernard (1981) and Sheehy (1976).

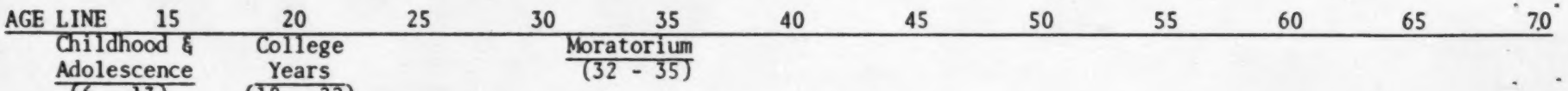
Woman's Development in a Career Path

In 1970, Margaret Hennig presented a doctoral study that looked at the life and career histories of 25 women who held line positions as presidents or divisional vice presidents in nationally recognized business and industry. Data compiled from the examination of this select group fall into six life cycle categories as illustrated in Figure 2.

Childhood

Women in the Hennig study were first-born children in middle class families in the United states. All fathers held management positions in business or academia. Mothers of the subjects were generally better educated than their spouses, but only one worked outside the home. Subjects recalled

Figure 2
WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT IN A CAREER PATH
AND CORRESPONDING DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS


AGE LINE 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 65 70
Childhood & Adolescence (6 - 13)
College Years (18 - 22)
Moratorium (32 - 35)
First Career Decade (22 - 32)
Career Maturity (35 -)

DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS

Childhood (6-13)	Adolescence (13-18)	College (18-22)	First Career Decade (22-32)	Moratorium (32-35)	Career Maturity (35-)
Develop strong father-daughter relationship	Emergence of New sexual identity	Leave family home	Get job with father's influence	Career push declines	Marriage
Enjoy freedom experiences	Cope with loss of freedom	Attend coed university	Change jobs within 2 years or stay with company entire career	Break with mentor	Integration of male-female polarities
Acquire masculine traits	Develop peer relationships	Study for career like father's	Develop a Dream of achieving responsible management position	Become parent to parents	Renew career drive
	Maintain father-daughter relationship	Seek new sources of personal support systems	Develop greater competence than men above and below--task specialist	Worry about not being able to have children	Advance to top management level
		Reject traditional feminine role	Boss becomes mentor	Reappraisal of life, goals, purpose	Develop new skill in relationships
		Develop working relationships with men on basis of competence and intellectual ability	Develop relationships based on task and competence	Social life takes priority	
			Reject marriage for career	Engage in personal risk taking	
			Social life declines		
			Develop strategies for handling male subordinates		
			Advance to high management level		

From Martaget Henning and Anne Jardim, The Managerial Woman

happy childhoods in which fathers and daughters enjoyed aggressive outdoor physical activities that engendered competitiveness and risktaking. Relationships with mothers were described as warm and supportive but lacking in rich detail.

Adolescence

The teen years presented a new awareness of sexual identity and parental restraints on freedom experiences. Subjects revealed a determination to avoid submersion into restrictive women's roles and displayed hostility and resentment toward their mothers who pushed them to learn the wiles of young ladies. Thus, mothers represented potential conflict and rejection while fathers were the primary source of security and reinforcement. Peer relationships were subordinate to the father-daughter bond.

College Years

Holding father as role model, subjects entered coeducational universities and majored in professionally oriented areas rather than the more traditional liberal arts. High academic achievement coupled with active social lives, goal setting, planning and avoidance of diversion marked the pattern of life. Critical during these years wa the development of working relationships with men on the basis of competence and intellectual ability. In the senior year, all subjects held career plans - not marriage and family goals.

First Career Decade

With fathers' influence, all subjects found jobs. For 23, entry level positions were as secretaries in business and finance. Several changed jobs within two years; then incredibly, all remained with employers for 30 years. A primary task was the development of the Dream - achieving responsible

management positions. To facilitate this, the boss became mentor. Self-perception became that of task specialist as subjects knowingly gained greater competence than men in superior and subordinate positions.

Near age 26, subjects made the conscious choice to postpone marriage and devote the self to in-depth career pursuit. A decline in social and family relationships followed.

By early thirties, subjects were supervising male subordinates. A new developmental task became the creation of strategies for handling men. Technical skill and competence became the key to controlling personal relationships.

Moratorium

The first notable adult transition occurred at mid-30. Jobs no longer held challenge; career push declined. The mentor relationship was abandoned as personal autonomy increased. Elderly parents required custodial care. Focus shifted from career to self.

A reappraisal of the life structure paralleled worry about not being able to bear children. New priorities were established as social life took precedence over career and subjects engaged in personal risk by falling in love.

For women in this study, the period of moratorium became a dramatic time of self-renewal. Having spent approximately 10 years in a concerted drive to climb the career ladder, the sudden lack of occupational challenges gave rise to questioning the purpose of life. The decision to reshape the Dream brought an opportunity to become a fully integrated individual.

Career Maturity

As the transitional period closed, half the subjects married. All

redefined the self as manager and woman. Having found the supportive special man or close friends, each renewed the career drive and advanced to top management positions. Now, subjects reshaped management behaviors and enjoyed freer, more open relationships. The perception of self as a well-oiled machine merged with deep concern for people.

Woman's Development in the Family Life Cycle

A study of the more traditional life structure is best viewed within the context of the family life cycle. This focuses more appropriately on the roles women fill as well as developmental tasks encountered (Figure 3).

Early Adult Transition

For some young women, leaving home is achieved by going to college; many others, however, seek employment, remain in the parental nest, and rather than complete that developmental task, simply slip into a home established at one's own marriage. For the more adventurous there may be a trip to Europe or hitch hiking across the country. The family remains a haven for rebound, a safe harbor to which one returns for security. In fact, many young women are "convinced that they must have protection if they are going to survive" (Dowling, 1981).

Among college women the strong affiliative need is realized through association in sororities. These organizations provide the site for locating the self in a peer group.

Anticipation and preparation for career are coupled with "dedicated man-hunting" (Coup, Greene and Gardner, 1973). "Take a few education courses. Then if...God forbid...anything should happen, you can always take care of yourself" (Rabiner, 1976). The normal expectation of finding a

Figure 3

WOMENS' DEVELOPMENT IN THE TRADITIONAL LIFE STRUCTURE
AND CORRESPONDING DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS

AGE LINE 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 65 70

Early Adult Transition (18 - 22)

Catch 30 Transition (30 - 35)

Shrinking Circle Transition (39 - 45)

Becoming Wife and Mother (20 - 29)

Full House Plateau (35 - 40)

Post Family Renewal or Resignation (45 - 55)

DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS

Early Adult Transition (18-22)

Enter College
Short Term Travel
Rebound to Family
Locate Self in Peer Group
Anticipate Short-Term Occupation

Catch 30 Transition (30-35)

Discontent with Marriage and Home
Increased focus on Children
Reduced Social Life
Tearing up of Life Structure

Shrinking Circle Transition (39-45)

Rework Identity
Reexamine Purpose
"Is This All There Is?"
"My Last Chance"

Post Family Renewal or Resignation (45-55)

Renewal
- Personal Happiness Increases
- Parents are Forgiven for Burdens of Children
- Children are "Let Go"
- Friends and Privacy Become More Important
- "No More Bullshit" Warm, Mellow 50's

Resignation
- Parents Become Children
- Children Become Strangers
- Mate Grows/Goes Away
- Career Becomes Just a Job
- Abandonment -- 50's Crisis

Becoming Wife & Mother (20-29)

Establish Home
Enjoy Brief Career
Prepare for Life of Nuturing
Develop Intimacy without Losing Self

Full House Plateau (35-40)

Return to Career Part-time
Provide Support System to Family Members
Become Active Community Participant

From Gail Sheehy, Passages and Helena Lopata, Occupation Housewife

caretaker as mate trains girls into dependency (Dowling, 1981).

Becoming Wife and Mother

Marriage and family incorporate attainment of the Dream visualized by a majority of young women. Career is more likely a short-term job based on little professional preparation. As children enter the home, a pattern of career discontinuity begins and years of nurturing ensue. A major task of the era is the development of a capacity for intimacy without losing self - a task many women ignore.

Catch 30 Transition

Near age 30, the blind devotion of being indispensable to one's mate wears thin. Caught up in job demands, husbands have little time for family and may, in fact, express boredom of these relationships (Sheehy, 1976). Children's needs exact near-total focus of parental energies and social life is pushed aside. Women - emotionally shackled, tired and complaining - seek ways to adjust the life structure. Frequently, divorce provides an escape hatch. Renewal, then, becomes survival as a single parent!

Full House Plateau

As children enter school, many women return to former occupations or seek professional training on a part-time basis. Renewal needs have opened the door to a world beyond the hearth. Now woman's role becomes multitudinous - wife, mother, lover, laundress, chauffeur, community activist, school volunteer, art patron, student, employee - the juggler. Providing support services to all family members is paramont; rarely, though, is this a reciprocal function.

Shrinking Circle Transition

The "empty nest syndrome" forces one to rework the identity and reexamine the purpose of life. The poignant question, "Is this all there is?", captures the crisis of despair and reappraisal. Having spent over a decade engaging in home and volunteer work, avenues are sought for new fulfillment. For some, the fear of competition and expectancy of negative consequences creates panic and a quick return to the protection of home. The more aggressive learn they have paid heavily through career discontinuity. They must start all over at entry level positions and salaries, holding little chance for more interesting jobs (Pifer, 1976). The opportunity for renewal of self will never be more dramatic.

Post Family Renewal or Resignation

Near age 50, two avenues emerge. The woman who determines to build a new life structure finds personal happiness increasing. Parents are forgiven for the burdens of childhood. Children are "let go." Friendships gain importance and privacy is cherished. The post-menopausal woman develops a mellow warmth and grace not seen in earlier years - renewal.

Lacking the courage and personal resources to reshape life, resignation to sameness occurs in other women. The parent becomes the child; children become strangers. Attempted careers become drab jobs. Mates grow away or, struggling with their own disillusionment, physically go away. The fifties become years of abandonment.

Contingencies

Neither scheme - the career path nor woman's traditional life cycle - seem adequate for this decade. For today's graduate students and women in

professional school, the question is not a choice of marriage and family or career, but how to manage all three! Jessie Bernard (1981) suggests contingency scheduling as a realistic approach to viewing life beyond marriage:

A. Marriage, 22; childbearing, 23-29; professional training, 30-32; career, 33-

B. Marriage, 22; professional training, 22-24; career initiation, 25-27; childbearing, 28-35; career resumption, 36-

C. Professional training, 22-24; marriage, 25; childbearing, 26-33; career, 34-

D. Professional training, 22-24; career initiation, 25-27; marriage, 28; childbearing, 29-36; career resumption, 37-

Everyone's future is contingent - on remaining alive and well, on holding a job, on war and peace.... The puzzle pieces are numerous. The timing of career growth is contingent on two major life events - marriage and childbearing. For women, both the length of occupational interruption and its timing hold impact for career development. In this regard, woman tend to be at least 10 years behind men in occupational achievement.

Self-Renewal: A Synthesis

New beginnings are spurred by crisis and change. In adult life cycle study, a transitional or bridging period terminates the existing structure and creates the possibility for a new one.

> "The primary tasks of every transitional period are to question and reappraise the existing structure, to explore various possibilities for change in self and world, and to move toward commitment to the crucial choices that form the basis for a new life structure in the ensuing stable period" (Levinson, 1978).

Within the working years of adult men's lives, Levinson identified three change periods which bear potential for renewal of self: Age 30 Transition (28-33); Mid-Life Transition (40-45); and Age 50 Transition (50-55). A

fourth, the Late Adult Transition (60-65) was not specifically addressed in this research. But the writer made this assumption,

> "... a man fears that youth within him is dying and that only the old man ... will survive for a brief and foolish old age. His task is to sustain his youthfulness in a new form appropriate to late adulthood (Levinson, 1978).

Research on the women's life cycle points up the need for a different scheme. Traditional socialization patterns and two major life events - marriage and childbearing - create life structures notably different from those of men. The family life cycle emphasizes the importance of women's roles - wife, homemaker, nurturer, mother, worker. Within this context are the contrasting career path and traditional life structure. Hennig's career executives allowed themselves no luxury of change or renewal until age 35. Then career priorities were replaced by delayed attention to self as woman and the initiation of intimate social relationships and marriage. Continued career drive became the focus of the resultant structure building era.

Women who choose traditional life styles seek renewal related to domestic roles at Catch 30, and the Shrinking Circle (39-45). Though not addressed in the research, a fifty's crisis is indicated as many women must cope with the stress of widowhood. For these women, renewal becomes a forced "breaking out" of the home and dependency patterns. Building functions include reentry into the world of work, professional training or retraining and development of a new concept of self!

Implications for Advising Men and Women in Educational Administration Programs

1. Research repeatedly emphasizes the importance of the mentor in career development during the twenties and early thirties. Yet according to

Hodgkinson (1974), relatively few college advisors are mentors as most students leave the university setting as amateurs, not as colleagues. Professors of graduate students need to be cognizant of their potential importance as mentor in supporting capable students' career drives and in facilitating the Dream.

2. Professors may enhance the advisement function by developing a sensitivity to students' progress in the life cycle. Recognition of the stressors of transitional periods and of developmental tasks to be achieved during stability eras will provide a basis for more effective support services.
3. Life cycle studies emphasize the differences in male and female development. Therefore, advisors must not assume that needs of all students are alike. Frequently, women who have followed traditional life paths will be developmentally at least 10 years behind a man of the same chronological age. These women will profit from special support services.
4. If graduate women students are to achieve high ranking positions in educational administration, special support services are indicated for development of traits commonly associated with being male (Weber, Feldman, and Poling, 1981). These services may include interviewing skills, mobility decision-making, utilization of information systems, management of personal and new professional roles, and entry to important formal and informal groups.
5. For students seeking renewal through administrative programs, experiential learning situations can be vital vehicles for growth. Particularly interesting are internships or apprenticeships and self-directed learning.

Summary

Studies of the adult life cycle indicate three identifiable transitional periods within working years in which one must reexamine and renew the direction of life and work. However, research indicates the timing and tasks of these vital transitions differ widely for men and women who enter the profession. Findings hold implication for individual and family stability and for sponsorship of persons entering educational administration.

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